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ABSTRACT

In 1977, the focus of teachers of English--and of all members of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)--should be the development of the arts and skills of reading and writing, especially by students who have been unsuccessful in those areas. This focus, with literature as its content, should include talking, listening, and understanding and should concern three groups: young children just learning to use English, learners in late childhood and early adolescence who have not learned to read or write well, and older adolescents and adults in colleges or continuing education programs who may have different dialects or who may be nontraditional students. In order to help potentially successful users of English, teachers--and all segments of NCTE--must develop, publish, and share research about teaching strategies and models. (JM)

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WORKING TOGETHER: TO LOOK AT THE PAST, TO EXAMINE THE PRESENT, TO CREATE A FUTURE

Charlotte Brooks

ALL OF US WANT TO KNOW WHERE WE CAME FROM, WHERE WE ARE NOW, WHERE WE'RE GOING. I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT PHILOSOPHY BUT ABOUT REALITY. I WANT YOU TO KNOW WHAT I BELIEVE TEACHING ENGLISH IS AND THE WAY I'D LIKE TO SEE US WORK TOGETHER IN 1977.

LET ME SAY IT SIMPLY. IN 1977, I'D LIKE THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO GATHER TOGETHER ALL OF ITS RESOURCES, INVESTIGATE ALL OF ITS STRENGTHS AND USE ALL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WITHIN IT FOR A PURPOSE. THAT PURPOSE IS TO SEE THAT ALL STUDENTS LEARN TO USE AND TO ENJOY THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND ITS LITERATURE. I'D LIKE THE FOCUS TO BE THE ARTS AND SKILLS OF READING AND WRITING, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. I WILL NOT - I CANNOT - SEPARATE TALKING AND LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING FROM READING AND WRITING. I ASK YOU NOW TO LOOK AT WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN OUR PROFESSION, TO EXAMINE CAREFULLY WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW, AND TO WORK TOGETHER FOR THE CREATION OF A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE FOR THESE STUDENTS.

LISTEN TO A RIDDLE FROM THE NON VERBAL TRADITION OF THE PAST. NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION DOES COME BEFORE VERBAL COMMUNICATION.

THE PATH CROSSES THE STREAM
AND THE STREAM CROSSES THE PATH;
WHICH IS THE ELDER?

THE ASHANTI PEOPLE OF GHANA, AFRICA, BEAT THIS ANCIENT RIDDLE

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ON THEIR DRUMS. THE RIDDLE SUGGESTS THAT IT'S HARD TO TELL WHICH CAME FIRST, THE PATH OR THE STREAM. THE RIDDLE IS ABOUT THE PAST, AND IN THE PAST ALL PEOPLE HAVE SHARED STORIES AS WELL AS RIDDLES. I'D LIKE TO TELL ONE OF THOSE OLD STORIES FROM THE ORAL TRADITION. TALKING AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG CHILDREN - AMONG ALL PEOPLE - COME BEFORE READING AND WRITING.

AN OLD MAN FELT THAT HE WAS ABOUT TO DIE. HE HAD MANY CHILDREN BUT LITTLE MONEY. THE CHILDREN OFTEN QUARRELED AMONG THEMSELVES, AND THE OLD MAN WAS AFRAID THAT THEY MIGHT DESTROY EACH OTHER OR THAT THEY MIGHT BE DESTROYED BY ENEMIES. HE CALLED THEM TOGETHER AND ASKED EACH ONE TO BRING HIM THE TWIG FROM A TREE. THEY DID SO. THE FATHER BOUND THE TWIGS TOGETHER AND PASSED THE BUNDLE TO THE CHILDREN, ASKING EACH IN TURN TO ATTEMPT TO BREAK IT. EACH ONE TRIED, BUT NOT ONE COULD DO IT. THEN THE OLD MAN UNTIED THE BUNDLE AND PASSED A SINGLE TWIG TO EACH CHILD AND ASKED EACH ONE TO BREAK IT. THIS WAS EASY. EVERYONE WAS SUCCESSFUL. THE FATHER HAD SHOWED HIS CHILDREN THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD NO MONEY TO LEAVE THEM, HE WANTED THEM TO WORK IN HARMONY AS A FAMILY, FOR IF THEY DID SO THEY WOULD NOT BE DESTROYED. LIKE THE BUNDLE OF TWIGS, THEY COULD NOT BE BROKEN.

THE SAME STORY IS TOLD IN MANY PLACES AND THERE ARE MANY VERSIONS. IN ONE, THE LEADER OF AN ARMY DEMONSTRATES WITH SPEARS. THAT VERSION MIGHT HAVE SERVED THIS YEAR, BECAUSE OUR PROFESSION IS BEING ATTACKED. I PREFER THE FAMILY METAPHOR, HOWEVER, BECAUSE WE NEED NOT BE DEFENSIVE. THERE IS NO TANGIBLE FOE SOMEWHERE OUT THERE SEEKING TO DESTROY ALL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH. THERE ARE CRITICS AND WRITERS AND PARENTS AND OTHERS WHO ARE TERRIBLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE TEACHING OF READING AND WRITING AND WHO SPEAK OUT LOUDLY, OFTEN IN CONFUSION AND

DESPAIR BECAUSE THEY THINK THEY KNOW WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT AND HOW IT SHOULD BE TAUGHT. THE REAL ENEMY IS IGNORANCE, AND WE CAN WORK TOGETHER TO COMBAT THAT IGNORANCE WITH KNOWLEDGE. OUR EMPHASIS MUST BE UPON CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSES TO THE CRITICS AND TO THE ATTACKS. LIKE THE BUNDLE OF TWIGS WE MUST STAY TOGETHER IF WE ARE TO RESIST BEING ATTACKED -- BEING BROKEN.

MY FIRST CONCERN IS THAT WE WORK TOGETHER AS A FAMILY OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH. AND I MEAN BY WORKING TOGETHER THAT I ASK OUR CONFERENCES, SECTIONS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, AFFILIATES, ASSEMBLIES, CAUCUSES, DIRECTORS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO ASSIST POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL USERS OF ENGLISH. THAT'S WHAT THE ATTACKS ARE ALL ABOUT, ANYWAY. PEOPLE LOOK AT TEST RESULTS; THEY SEE THAT SCORES ARE DROPPING IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. THEY READ ABOUT STUDENTS ENTERING COLLEGES WITHOUT THE ABILITY TO READ AND WRITE. THEY HEAR ABOUT TOP HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WITH INFLATED GRADES WHO ARE UNABLE TO COPE WITH COLLEGE WORK. THEY KNOW THAT SUCCESS IN COLLEGE DEPENDS UPON READING AND WRITING IN ALL SUBJECTS. SO THEY PANIC. THEY BLAME LANGUAGE ARTS AND ENGLISH TEACHERS AND THEY WANT US TO GO BACK TO THE BASICS -- EVEN THOUGH THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT THE BASICS ARE. WE MUST DEFINE THE BASICS OF ENGLISH FOR OURSELVES AND FOR OUR CRITICS, AND WE MUST DEFINE THEM THIS YEAR FOR THE STUDENTS - AT ALL LEVELS - WHO ARE POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL USERS OF ENGLISH. THE SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS ARE O.K. THEY'LL DO WELL BECAUSE THEY COME FROM HOMES THAT GIVE THEM CHANCES TO READ AND TO WRITE, AND BECAUSE WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN PREPARED TO TEACH THESE STUDENTS AND BESIDES, WE NEVER READ ABOUT THEM NOW. LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO, THIS YEAR, FOR THE ONES WE DO READ ABOUT, BECAUSE IN SUCH A SHORT TIME WE CAN'T BE ALL THINGS FOR ALL STUDENTS. THAT'S TOO MUCH.

POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL USERS OF ENGLISH. POTENTIALLY EXCELLENT ENGLISH PEOPLE? I THOUGHT SERIOUSLY ABOUT THAT, FOR THE ACRONYM IS PEEP AND A GOOD ILLUSTRATION - A POSSIBLE LOGO - COULD HAVE BEEN A CHICKEN EMERGING FROM AN EGG. BUT I DECIDED AGAINST IT. TOO PRECIOUS. I SELECTED "POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL USERS OF ENGLISH," CONSTRUCTING THE PHRASE CAREFULLY BECAUSE I WANTED TO BE DEFINITIVE AND POSITIVE. I DIDN'T WANT TO USE THE TERMS SLOW LEARNERS, DEPRIVED AND DISADVANTAGED LEARNERS, REMEDIAL STUDENTS, UNINVOLVED OR ALIENATED LEARNERS; STUDENTS IN "BONEHEAD ENGLISH" COLLEGE CLASSES. THESE WORDS HAVE BEEN USED SO OFTEN AND SO LOOSELY AND FOR SO MANY YEARS THAT THEY'VE LOST MEANING. I PROPOSE THAT AS A FAMILY OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH, WORKING TOGETHER, WE LOOK AT PAST TEACHING SUCCESSES, EXAMINE PRESENT STRATEGIES, AND CREATE A FUTURE FOR THIS SPECIAL GROUP BASED FIRMLY UPON OUR DEFINITION OF WHAT ENGLISH IS, OUR KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE REAL ENGLISH BASICS ARE, OUR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT RESEARCH HAS DEMONSTRATED AND OUR PRACTICES OF EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES. I SUGGEST THAT WE DIRECT OUR ATTENTION TO READING AND WRITING AT ALL LEVELS AND THAT WE ADDRESS, DIRECTLY, THE NEEDS OF POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL USERS OF ENGLISH. WE MUST INCLUDE TALKING, LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING: WE MUST CONSIDER LITERATURE THE ESSENTIAL CONTENT OF OUR DISCIPLINE. OUR CONCERN WILL BE WITH THREE GROUPS.

WHO ARE THEY?

THEY ARE YOUNG CHILDREN WHO ARE JUST LEARNING TO USE ENGLISH - TO LISTEN TO IT, UNDERSTAND IT, SPEAK IT, AND READ IT AND WRITE IT. LET'S HELP THOSE CHILDREN WHO NEED US TO STEP IN BEFORE THEY ARE CALLED SLOW, DUMB, RETARDED. AMONG THESE ARE CHILDREN FROM MINORITY GROUPS, POOR KIDS OF ALL COLORS, CHILDREN FROM THE SLUMS OF CITY OR COUNTRY; MIDDLE CLASS CHILDREN LIVING DULL, LONELY LIVES IN THE MIDDLE CLASS SUBURBS.

I OFTEN TELL A STORY ABOUT A LITTLE BOY AT A BUS STOP WITH HIS MOTHER. I'M SORRY IF YOU'VE HEARD IT BEFORE, BUT IT ILLUSTRATES MY POINT. A TAXI DRIVER CALLED OUT TO THE BOY, "HEY, BOY, WHY YOU AIN'T IN SCHOOL?" THE MOTHER ANSWERED. "HE ON'Y FO." HOW DO YOU THINK THIS CHILD WAS CLASSIFIED IN SCHOOL? DID THE NON STANDARD ENGLISH HE SURELY LEARNED IN HIS HOME AND ON HIS STREET LABEL HIM AS SLOW? HOW CAN WE HELP OUR CRITICS UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW ABOUT SUCH CHILDREN?

SOME OF THEM ARE LEARNERS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND JUNIOR HIGHS -- THOSE YEARS OF LATE CHILDHOOD AND EARLY ADOLESCENCE WHEN MANY HAVE NOT LEARNED TO READ OR WRITE WELL AND FOR WHOM MASSIVE DOSES OF PHONICS AND DITTO SHEETS - NASTY MEDICINE - HAVE BEEN PRESCRIBED. DAN FADER WROTE ABOUT A BOY WHO WANTED TO READ HAWTHORNE'S <u>SCARLET LETTER</u> BECAUSE HE THOUGHT IT WAS A BOOK ABOUT A BAD WOMAN. HE READ IT, LABORIOUSLY, AND NOT ONLY ENJOYED IT BUT UNDERSTOOD IT WELL ENOUGH TO SAY THAT HESTER "REALLY WASN'T NO BAD LADY." THESE LEARNERS ARE ALSO USUALLY POOR AND SOMETIMES TROUBLESOME. THEIR LANGUAGE, ORAL AND WRITTEN, MAY NOT BE STANDARD ENGLISH, AND PROBABLY THEIR ORAL READING REFLECTS THIS DIFFERENCE. WE ALREADY SUSPECT THAT EXPOSURE TO MANY EXCELLENT, INVOLVING BOOKS WILL HELP SUCH LEARNERS. LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR THESE STUDENTS. HOW CAN WE SHARE AMONG OURSELVES AND WITH OTHERS WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY DEVELOPED?

THERE ARE OLDER ADOLESCENTS AND ADULTS IN COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES, ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS. THEY ARE OFTEN PARENTS OF THE TWO GROUPS JUST DESCRIBED. LIKE THE PARENT AT THE BUS STOP, THEY MAY HAVE DIFFERENT DIALECTS. AND THEY MAY BE NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS: WOMEN WHO HAVE BROUGHT UP THE KIDS AND WANT TO RETURN TO SCHOOL, LAW-BREAKERS, LAW ENFORCERS, GOVERNMENT WORKERS, PEOPLE IN PROGRAMS THAT GIVE

CREDIT FOR PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING. I WORK WITH STUDENTS LIKE THIS NOW, AND I KNOW THAT THEY CAN LEARN THE ARTS AND SKILLS OF READING AND WRITING. RECENTLY ONE SUCH CLASS READ CHINUA ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART AND NO LONGER AT EASE AFTER READING AND DISCUSSING YEATS' "THE SECOND COMING" AND T.S. ELIOT'S "JOURNEY OF THE MAGI." FINALLY AFTER WRITING ABOUT THESE WORKS, THEY READ AND SHARED REACTIONS TO GLORIA ODEN'S POEM, "THE CHILD IS THE MOTHER." YOU MAY NOT KNOW THIS POEM, SO I'LL READ THE PARTS THAT MADE THE ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS AMONG ALL OF THE READINGS.

THIS CHILD IS THE MOTHER

GLORIA C. ODEN UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

BLACK IS: SLAVERY WAS: I AM.

SOMETIMES
WHEN MY MIND IDLES
MEMORY TAPS THE SUBTLE
G EARS
OF R ECOLLECTION A ND
I AM LOCKED INTO
MY K INDERGARTEN YEARS AND
SEATED IN THAT
M ETHODIST-SIMPLE,
STAINED GLASS B OSOM OF
THE L ORD ON A
SHINING SUNDAY MORNING

. . . .

I AM NO LONGER AT EASE.
IT W ILL HAPPEN SOON,
I KNOW: THAT BRITH
MORE T ERRIBLE THAN ALL MY
SMALL FEARS RECOGNIZE;
THAT BLOOD-BATHED IRRUPTION
WHICH IS BUT THE BEAST
IN REFORM OF ITS LABYRINTH.

. . . .

NOW IT HAPPENS:
SHE MOVES,
THAT TALL WOMAN
IMMEDIATELY IN FRONT OF ME
WHO H ATTED AND WREATHED IN
A TONNAGE OF BLACK VEILING
HAS BEEN SITTING LIKE
SOME M EGALITH O F
SLOWED TIME
MUTE AND MOTIONLESS,
UNRESPONSIVE TO THE JOY IN FLUX
ABOUT HER. BUT,

NOW SHE MOVES.
HER CENTER CAN NO
LONGER HOLD AGAINST
THE STORE OF GRACE
WEDDED TO HER DAYS.

. . . .

STUDENTS WERE AWARE OF THE ALLUSIONS TO THE PREVIOUSLY READ YEATS AND ELIOT POEMS, AND SOME DISCUSSED THE RELIGIOUS THEME, FOUND IN THEIR READINGS OF ACHEBE'S ARROW OF GOD AND BALDWIN'S GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN AND ALEX HALEY'S ROOTS.

I REMEMBER MEETING ALEX HALEY IN 1968 WHEN HE WAS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN HIS RESEARCH FOR ROOTS. WE WERE ON A PLANE, WITH DIFFERENT DESTINATIONS, BUT I - WHO HAD TALKED WITH HIM LESS THAN HALF AN HOUR- WAS DETERMINED TO HAVE HIM SHARE HIS EXPERIENCES WITH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MY CITY. HE WENT TO WASHINGTON AND SPOKE TO ADULT MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE EVENING AFTER KEEPING STUDENTS AND TEACHERS SILENT AND ABSORBED FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS IN THE DAY. THEN IN 1969, HE WAS THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE SECONDARY SECTION LUNCHEON, AT THE NCTE CONVENTION, AGAIN IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ONE OF THE MOST MOVING MOMENTS IN HIS TELLING AND IN HIS BOOK IS THE TIME WHEN THE WOMEN OF THE SMALL GAMBIAN VILLAGE, REALIZING THAT THIS AFRO-AMERICAN IS THEIR LONG LOST RELATIVE, MOVED AROUND HIM AND THRUST THEIR BABIES INTO HIS ARMS. THE PAST KUNTA KINTE, BECOMES THE PRESENT ALEX HALEY, AND THE FUTURE, THE GAMBIAN BABIES.

HOW CAN WE, TEACHERS OF ENGLISH AT ALL LEVELS, GO TO THE PAST AND THE PRESENT TO CREATE A FUTURE IN WHICH THE LEARNERS I HAVE IDENTIFIED WILL BE SUCCESSFUL? I'D LIKE TO SUGGEST SOME OF THE THINGS WE CAN TRY.

LET'S BEGIN WITH YOU, WORKING TOGETHER AS ALL OF US CAN WORK TOGETHER IN THE FUTURE. ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE SCHOOL, JUNIOR HIGH, SECONDARY, COLLEGE, TEACHER TRAINERS, LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, COMPOSITION, CURRICULUM, READING: ALL LEVELS AND ALL ASPECTS OF ENGLISH. I'M GOING TO SHARE SOME OF MY OWN EXPERIENCES: I'D LIKE YOUR IDEAS, FROM YOUR EXPERIENCES AND FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS. YOUR PARTICIPATION NOW WILL BE AN

EXTENSION OF THE INVOLVEMENT BEGUN WHEN MANY OF YOU HELPED ME TO PLAN THIS YEAR'S CONVENTION PROGRAM. YOUR CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT WILL BE THE BEST BEGINNING FOR THE KIND OF FUTURE THE COUNCIL CAN HAVE - AND WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT "BEGINNINGS" THIS YEAR. PLEASE JOT DOWN YOUR SUGGESTIONS AND TAKE THEM TODAY OR TOMORROW TO THE LOBBY DESK AND ASK THE CLERK TO PUT THEM IN MY MAILBOX. NAMES ARE NOT NEEDED - JUST HELPFUL IDEAS.

FIRST WE MUST PUBLISH AND SHARE RESEARCH ABOUT TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL. HOW CAN WE DO THIS SO WELL THAT A REAL AND PERMANENT IMPACT CAN BE MADE UPON THE TEACHING OF READING AND WRITING AT ALL LEVELS?

NEXT, ALL SEGMENTS OF THE COUNCIL CAN DEVELOP STRATEGIES, WITHIN THEIR OWN AREAS OF COMPETENCE, FOR IMPROVING THE INTEREST AND COMPETENCE OF THE IDENTIFIED LEARNERS. OUR CONFERENCES, SECTIONS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, ASSEMBLIES, AFFILIATES AND CAUCUSES CAN ALL CONTRIBUTE. THIS MIGHT MEAN PROGRAM STRANDS AT THEIR MEETINGS OR PREPARATION OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR NEXT YEAR'S CONVENTION. IT MIGHT MEAN THE WRITING OF ARTICLES FOR OUR JOURNALS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS. PERHAPS IT MEANS ALL-LEVEL CONFERENCES OR DIFFERENT KINDS OF CONVENTIONS. HOW CAN WE DO THIS BEST?

THEN, THERE'S EVALUATION. THE EXCELLENT WORK ALREADY DONE BY KNOWLEDGEABLE COUNCIL MEMBERS IN THIS TERRIBLY IMPORTANT AREA HAS BEEN HELPFUL, BUT HOW WIDELY IS IT USED AND KNOWN? WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SEE THAT WHAT HAS BEEN WRITTEN IS USED? WHAT FURTHER WORK MUST BE DONE?

FINALLY, INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL MEMBERS HAVE DEVELOPED TEACHING STRATEGIES AND MATERIALS FOR ALL LEVELS. OTHERS MAY BE WILLING TO DO SO THIS YEAR. WHAT CAN WE DO TO ENCOURAGE INVOLVEMENT AND TO INSURE THE EXCHANGE AND USE OF THIS WORK? IDEA EXCHANGES, NEW PUBLICATIONS, AN

AD HOC COMMITTEE, A SPECIAL CONFERENCE, INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS? HOW CAN WE LISTEN TO INDIVIDUAL COUNCIL MEMBERS - AND INTERESTED NON-MEMBERS?

THANK YOU FOR ANY HELP YOU CAN GIVE.

I SPOKE ABOUT INVESTIGATING ONE'S HERITAGE. STUDENTS AT ALL LEVELS MIGHT ENJOY EXPLORING THEIR OWN ANCESTRY. THEY CAN ASK QUESTIONS OF OLDER RELATIVES, THUS LEARNING TO INTERVIEW. THEY CAN LISTEN AND TAKE NOTES. THEY CAN LEARN TO USE LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVES. THEY CAN WRITE AUTOBIOGRAPHIES AND BIOGRAPHIES. BRITISH YOUNGSTERS DO A LOT OF THIS KIND OF WRITING. I REMEMBER, WHEN I TAUGHT IN ENGLAND, STUDENTS OF BRITISH, SCOTTISH, IRISH AND WELSH HERITAGE WHO SHARED THEIR LIVES, EXPERIENCES AND EVEN SOME LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS AND WRITINGS. PERHAPS THERE'S A MODEL - OR PART OF ONE - IN THIS EXPERIENCE.

I HAVE, IN MY MIND, ANOTHER PARTIAL MODEL - A MODEL BUILT UPON ALL I'VE SAID TO YOU TONIGHT. IT'S A FAMILY MODEL, AND IT INCLUDES TEACHERS AND STUDENTS, PARENTS, AUNTS AND UNCLES AND KIDS: EVEN GRANDPARENTS AND FRIENDS FROM THE COMMUNITY. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL READERS AND WRITERS COME FROM HOMES WHERE READING AND WRITING ARE DONE AS A MATTER OF COURSE, LIKE EATING AND BRUSHING THE TEETH. SOMEHOW- I THINK WE CAN DEVELOP A MODEL FOR POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL USERS OF ENGLISH. PERHAPS ONE PLACE FOR SUCH A MODEL IS IN CONTINUING OR ADULT EDUCATION, WHERE WE CAN WORK WITH PARENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT NECESSARILY PARENTS, AND CHILDREN. OR MAYBE AT THE OTHER LEVELS PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN BE INVOLVED MORE FULLY IN READING AND WRITING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. AGAIN, THE READING AND WRITING CANNOT BE SEPARATE FROM TALKING AND LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING OTHERS.

IF WE WORK TOGETHER, WE CAN DO IT. WE CAN DEVISE THE MODELS. WE CAN DEVELOP LEARNING STRATEGIES INCORPORATING OUR DEFINITION OF THE

BASIC SKILLS - INCLUDING LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE FOR ALL LEARNERS. AND WE CAN CREATE A FUTURE IN WHICH POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL USERS OF LANGUAGE, AT ALL LEVELS, BECOME ACTUALLY SUCCESSFUL LEARNERS WHO TALK AND LISTEN, READ AND WRITE SKILLFULLY AND EASILY, CONSTANTLY AND CONFIDENTLY AND JOYFULLY. THEY WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY ARE DOING AND WHY THEY DO IT.

I STARTED THIS TALK WITH THE FIRST PART OF A GHANAIAN RIDDLE, BUT I DIDN'T FINISH IT. I DIDN'T GIVE YOU THE ANSWER. UNLIKE THE SPHINX - OH, VERY MUCH UNLIKE THE SILENT SPHINX- I'LL FINISH IT NOW.

THE PATH CROSSES THE STREAM
AND THE STREAM CROSSES THE PATH;
WHICH IS THE ELDER?
WE FOUND THE STREAM WHEN WE MADE THE PATH;
THE STREAM IS FROM LONG AGO
WHEN THE CREATOR MADE THINGS.

THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE IS A SYNTHESIS AND A SUMMARY OF WHAT I'VE SAID. WE CAN FIND THE STREAM OF THE PAST AS WE WALK THE PATH OF THE PRESENT. AND WE CAN, TOGETHER - ALL OF US-, CREATE A FUTURE FOR POTENTIALLY SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS AT ALL LEVELS - LEARNERS OF OUR LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE.